



DISCRETIONARY SERVICES

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 12/15

9 FEBRUARY 2015

The purpose of this paper is to ask Members to consider the Isle of Wight Council's clarification of its budget intentions in respect of Beach Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance from 1 April 2015 as set out in a letter from its Strategic Manager for Recreation, Leisure and Public Spaces dated 23 January 2015.

No. DETAIL

1) BACKGROUND

- a) The decision of the Isle of Wight Council (IoWC) to cease funding of Beach Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance from 1 April 2015 in response to its need to achieve major Budget reductions was made known to Town and Parish Councils last summer.
- b) The consequences were discussed at meetings at County Hall convened by the IoWC's Strategic Manager, Recreation, Leisure and Public Spaces, Alex Minns: Beach Cleaning on 15 July and Grounds Maintenance on 23 July.
- c) A letter from Alex Minns of 20 August set out a range of options for the future management of both services and asked Town and Parish Councils to identify their choices by the end of October.
- d) The Town Council Meeting of 13 October 2014, in Minutes 143/14 and 144/15, determined that both Beach Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance would be provided by its own contractual arrangements.
- e) Developments since then have been the recognition that the IoWC has an element of statutory responsibility for Beach Cleaning and whether and which of the Island's Principal Parks would continue to be funded by the Isle of Wight Council.
- f) These matters have been clarified by the letter from Alex Minns dated 23 January 2015, a copy of which is attached to this Report.

2) BEACH CLEANING

- a) The Public Buildings Working Group has already agreed plans for providing this service to the same standard and frequency as that of the current contract through a combination of employed staff for the actual cleaning of the town's four Beaches – Ventnor, Bonchurch, Steephill Cove and Orchard Bay – and a contract with a local waste removal operator for the disposal process.
- b) The anticipated annual cost of this service is £15,000 compared with the £23,500 allocated for it within the existing IoWC contract.
- c) The IoWC acknowledges that it does have a statutory responsibility to clean beaches to a minimum standard and the letter from Alex Minns states:
The minimum standards were assessed and considered the location and typical levels of use; for Ventnor this was assessed as 3 times per week between May and September but daily during the May and summer school holidays, whilst for Bonchurch it was weekly between May and September.
- d) It is recognised that these minimum standards will not be sufficient to maintain the Blue Flag status of these Beaches and the case for the Town Council to continue with its proposed arrangements for maintaining existing standards remains.
- e) The letter commits to an ongoing contribution to the costs on the following basis:
Upon receipt of a fully casted schedule from the town council detailing the level of cleaning that will be provided, the contractor that will be undertaking the works and how this will be monitored the IWC will pay the amount that it would have paid its own contractor for the works to meet the minimum standards.
- f) It is proposed that as this element is as yet uncalculated and the new arrangements untested, for the first year of Town Council operation the full anticipated cost is provided for in the Town

3) GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

- a) The 23 January letter from Alex Minns identifies 17 areas that will not be maintained by the IoWC although it will continue to maintain Ventnor Park at the reduced specification of summer bedding only.
 - b) The annual costs of maintaining the 17 areas as supplied by the IoWC on the basis of its current contract total of £19,620, with the Cascades accounting for £9,963 of that.
 - c) The Public Buildings Working Group has already carried out detailed investigation of the areas involved and agreed a basis for contract standards.
 - d) It is proposed that a total of £20,000 be provided for this service in the Town Council's Budget and Precept for 2015/16.
 - e) The Public Buildings Working Group has responded to the concerns about the condition of the Cascade this year by seeking estimates for its complete overall together with refurbishment of handrails and fences.
 - f) It recommends the Town Council to agree to commit up to £9,000 from the provision in the current year budget for services the Isle of Wight Council is discontinuing for this work to proceed at an appropriate time.
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4) RECOMMENDATIONS

The Town Council is recommended to:

- i) confirm the inclusion of provisions of £15,000 for Beach Cleaning and £20,000 for Grounds Maintenance in its Budget and Precept for 2015/16;
 - ii) authorise the Town Clerk, advised by the Public Buildings Working Group and on the basis of decisions of the Staffing Committee as appropriate, to establish arrangements for the cleaning of the four beaches – Ventnor, Bonchurch, Steephill Cove and Orchard Bay - from 1 April 2015;
 - iii) authorise the Town Clerk, advised by the Public Buildings Working Group, to conduct a tender process for the maintenance of the 17 areas identified in the letter from the Isle of Wight Council dated 23 January 2015 to be effective from 1 April 2015; and
 - iv) authorise the Town Clerk to deploy up to £9,000 from the contingency provision for services the Isle of Wight Council will no longer to continue to restore the Cascades to the standard the town expects including the implementation of the specification attached to this report and the repair and refurbishment of the handrails and fencing.
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Ventnor Cascades.

Central waterfall section and western section in front of the St Augustine Hotel

This is a one off job of work, quite independent and separate to any current or later contract, and is intended to upgrade the area in readiness for summer planting. The work to be carried out in January or February 2015

- **All the existing bedding areas**

Excavate to remove all impoverished topsoil and embedded perennial weeds and dispose off site, and replace all areas with new good quality top soil of equivalent depth .

Or

Deep digging to thoroughly remove perennial weeds, and dispose

&. Incorporate compost and manure into new soil or cleaned beds.

- **The areas containing mature shrubs**

Deep dig weeding around established plants, including lifting and replanting where necessary. Mulch the areas with composted chippings.

- **The waterfall and boggy area below the waterfall**

Strip off all dead plants and weed growth from level areas and rock faces and dispose, to ensure clear running of the water courses.

- **The railings surrounding the cascade and those on seaward side of cascade pathway**

Cut back hedging, ivy and plant growth from all sides of the railings and handrails to ensure free access to all faces for repair and redecoration

- Allow for observing all the Health and Safety, insurance and indemnity obligations contained in the IOWC contract to be applicable for working for the Ventnor Town Council In particular, allow for all costs in working around the cabling and lamps of the area floodlighting and the water turbine electrical generator housing